



Powered by Clickability

June 2, 2006

VETERANS AFFAIRS NEWS**PHILLIP GOMEZ / PVT**

Nye County's new Veteran Affairs service officers were in Tonopah recently. Tonopah representative Nancy Maslach and Pahrump representative Ken Shockley, center, are flanked by Jo Cantrell, far left, Nevada Office of Veterans' Services, Las Vegas, and Shelbi Bondurant, far right, administrative assistant for the Pahrump office at the Nevada JobConnect.

Find this article at:

<http://www.pahrumpvalleytimes.com/2006/06/02/news/va.html>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.



Powered by Clickability

May 31, 2006**Shockley: New veterans service officer**

PVT

Ken Shockley, Pahrump's new veterans service officer, is himself a disabled veteran, and one who didn't just have his job handed to him as a result of his injury.

"I am a product of the Veterans Affairs," says Shockley. "Being a former Marine, I was injured on active duty at Twenty-nine Palms, Calif., during a training exercise in the gearing-up for Iraq."

Shockley was a Marine corporal at the time, about 30 days away from getting promoted to sergeant. His career plan was to be a Marine Corps "lifer."

Then he was disabled and couldn't perform the physical exercises required in the Marine Corps or pass the physical tests.

When Shockley was discharged, he found "there wasn't much help out there."

Fortunately, he discovered he was eligible for vocational rehabilitation through the VA. He got a degree in computer science information systems and got back into the workforce.

Shockley got a job with the U.S. Postal Service in Pahrump, moving from California to take the position that was lined up beforehand.

But it turned out that the repetitive motions required in the job prevented him from being hired. So the day he was to start work, Shockley was out on the street looking for another job.

He found a part-time job at Spring Mountain Clinic and then worked for two years at Office Products Inc. in Pahrump. Then he saw the ad in the paper for the veterans service officer.

"I have been on the other side of the desk looking for benefits," says Shockley. "Hopefully, I can be of help in getting benefits to other vets."

Find this article at:<http://www.pahrumpvalleytimes.com/2006/05/31/news/vet.html>☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.<http://stephensmedia.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Pahrump+Valley+Ti...> 6/4/2006



Powered by Clickability

May 31, 2006**Veterans service office opens in Pahrump**By PHILLIP GOMEZ
PVT

Pahrump celebrated its new Veterans Affairs service office, along with one in Tonopah, at a ceremony at Nevada JobConnect Thursday.

The festive event featured a color guard ceremony, a ribbon-cutting, speeches and an outdoor barbecue. The occasion was also the first anniversary for the One-Stop JobConnect, located in the Calvada Eye.

The appointments of Ken Shockley in Pahrump and Nancy Maslach in Tonopah could be significant for Nye County. "These guys are great," said Tim Tetz, executive director of the state Office of Veterans Services. "They will be a boon for the local economies.

"In Nevada we accept \$28 million from the federal government each year in disability compensation and pension benefits for veterans within the state," Tetz said.

If each of the two service officers brings into their respective local economies, as expected, \$2 million to \$4 million in cumulative veteran benefits, "It's an absolute windfall for the entire community," he said.

Economists say the average "turnover" of every dollar provided in a small community is three times, Tetz said.

"This is the only county-run veteran service program in the state," said Tetz.

Nye County has agreed to a minimum three years of funding the program, following a two-year start-up period under the state.

Legislation provides for \$300,000 in grant funding for Fiscal Year 2006-07 to get the program up and running.

"I think they'll realize what an economic windfall this is," said Tetz of the county commissioners.

The VA program is based on the fact that many veterans in need of services typically shun applying for them because of the paperwork involved. Nationwide, veterans taking advantage of federal compensation programs for their military service average only 13 percent of those eligible. In Nevada, the percentage is only 10 percent, Tetz said.

Where veterans service officers are available to help vets with paperwork, the percentage goes up.

"The paperwork is a nightmare, a bloody nightmare," Tetz said. "It's from a half-inch to six inches thick.

<http://stephensmedia.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Pahrump+Valley+Ti...> 6/4/2006

It's unbelievable the amount of doctors' reports, medical exams, tests and statements that make up the packet you have to put together.

"That's the benefit of a service officer - that he or she can really represent the vet. You're twice as successful in getting your claims, and you get twice as much in benefits."

"Unfortunately the system is a lengthy process," Tetz said.

"They're looking at nine months," he said of the lead-time for benefit applications to make their way through the bureaucracy to resolution. "It's going to take approximately nine months to review the case to see if you're eligible for whatever benefits you have coming.

Benefits may have to do with education, retraining, medical compensation, disability compensation or pension compensation.

There's also a pension compensation program for surviving spouses of those who have served.

It is not necessary to have been injured on duty to gain certain benefits, Tetz said.

For spouses living below the poverty level, the VA will pay them a monthly stipend to bring the spouse or family up to a higher living wage-level, Tetz said.

"Without a service officer to walk you through it, you'd never know," he said.

"We kind of think of ourselves as the big brothers and big sisters of veterans," said Jo Cantrell, the Las Vegas supervisor of the two new veteran service officers.

"There's so much to learn," said Maslach. "They say you don't learn it overnight." Training has been, and will continue to be, much of the focus of the service officers through next month. Already the VA has booked appointments through July.

Administrative assistant Shelbi Bondurant can set up an appointment with Shockley for veterans needing assistance. The number to call at the JobConnect is 537-2323. Ask for Veteran Affairs.

Find this article at:

<http://www.pahrumpvalleytimes.com/2006/05/31/news/veterans.html>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.